

## McMinnville Affordable Housing Task Force

Minutes from the Jan 19<sup>th</sup> Meeting, McMinnville Civic Hall

### Attendees:

Howie Harkema (Former Director of the St Barnabas Soup kitchen / President, COMPASS Center)  
Sheryl Hill (Citizen at Large)  
Elise Hui (Executive Director, Housing Authority of Yamhill County)  
Martha Meeker (City Manager)  
Kellie Menke (City Councilor)  
Doug Montgomery (City Planning Director)  
Jeff Sargent (Executive Director Yamhill County Action Partnership – YCAP)  
Absent due to scheduling conflicts: Remy Drabkin (Councilor); Alan Ruden (Councilor)

Presenting Guests: Kaye Sawyer, Gospel Rescue Mission

This meeting was the first for the Affordable Housing Task Force since its standup was directed by the McMinnville City Council. Once introductions were complete, the meeting started with an update on the Gospel Rescue Shelter expansion. Planning for the first part of this project has started as the Gospel Rescue prepares for the delivery of a modular unit for emergency shelter housing.

After that, Elise Hui provided background on Yamhill County's current 10 year plan to end homelessness (<http://www.co.yamhill.or.us/sites/default/files/Yamhill%20County%20Ten%20Year%20Plan%20Revised%20Jan%202013.pdf>) . While many of the original initiatives such as the Community Connect event and the homeless count have matured into self managing programs, there is still work to be done on the Housing First approach as there is not a lot available in Yamhill County. Active management of the plan has been somewhat in a standstill over the last couple of years as most of original action steps have been completed.

The group then discussed initiatives in other areas of NW Oregon such as Washington County's funded program for housing assistance but acknowledged the difficulty of following a similar path as McMinnville's small size (less than 50,000) means it is not entitled to a direct allocation of Community Development Block Grant funds which often funds initiatives like Washington County's.

Next, the group received an update on the COMPASS Center program. The Center's advisory group has been incorporated and received its EIN number which allows it to begin fund raising. It's still waiting on its official Non-Profit status. The task force then reviewed the number of beds currently available throughout the County and discussed how word is spread to individuals in need. It also talked about the types of housing that is needed and the differences between emergency housing based on a few nights and transitional housing which provides something longer term.

Discussion then turned to what the group felt should be its focus and ranged from an awareness that success on various initiatives could exacerbate the problem as more individuals come to McMinnville to take advantage of expanded services to a desire to ensure money is spent wisely to an acknowledgment that any changes to long standing zoning or other practices must be thoroughly understood. Also, the group acknowledged this is a long term effort. In the shorter term, the group discussed the direction from the Council to provide priorities and to address "low hanging fruit" first.

The session concluded with a need to reach out to other communities for information and to set some basic definitions and baselines to aid the group in addressing larger goals. Howie Harkema mentioned a previous program, “Piecing Community Together”, had already done much to outline terms and definitions and he would provide that material to the group. The group also wanted to gain an understanding of the existing rental market and to hear from existing builders on why they are building the properties they do. As a result, the staff will gather market analysis data from existing realtors and builders and arrange for future presentations or discussion opportunities with Lafayette Apartments (McMinnville’s newest apartment complex), Jim Long who heads Bend’s Affordable Housing program and the County’s Health and Human Services Department. The group also suggested adding Darrick Price from Community Home Builders to the group’s membership.